The Theosophical FORUM

APRIL 1903

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ISSUED MONTHLY

VOL. 8 NO. 12

Flushing

New York

Ten Cents a Copy One Dollar Yearly

The Annual Convention

of the

Theosophical Society in America

Will be held in
New York City on

April 26, 27 and 28.

The question of reviving Dues will be raised.

Details of place and procedure will shortly be sent to Branches and Members at large.

For the Executive Committee:

SECRETARY T. S. A.
Box 1584, New York City.

"A New Pamphlet on Karma."

A copy of this pamphlet will be sent gratis to any reader of the Forum who will send his name and address on a postcard to the publisher. Thomas Green, 10 Park Road Mansions, Wandsworth Common, London, S. W. For Propaganda purposes copies will be supplied at 3 cents each plus postage at the rate of 16 cents per dozen. Payment may be made in postage stamps.

Entered at the Post Office at Flushing, N. Y., as second-class matter, April 20, 1901.

THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

VOL. 8. APRIL, 1903 No. 12

VIBRATIONS.

There is a rhythm vibrating through the universe which causes all things to vibrate in unison with it. It makes inanimate Nature take form in harmonious lines of beauty. Not even a snowflake but joyfully obeys this rhythmic law of beauty. In response to it the butterfly paints her wings and the nightingale tunes his lute. The composer arranges his anthem, the painter his colors, the poet his words, and the true man his deeds, to come into unison with the same great song of life. The effort is with most of us unconscious to-day. When we shall become conscious of what we are doing we shall come into the greater joy that a Mozart possesses over a nightingale, or a Raphael over a butterfly. The joy of the consciousness of harmony is greater than the mere feeling of the harmony. It is the joy of the soul over the body.

Life is the successive annihilation of shorter rhythmic waves by the larger ones, a continuous progression to an infinitely great vibration. You have seen a storm begin at sea—first are the ripples, then the short, choppy waves, and finally come the grand, heaving swells which absorb all the little waves and ripples that preceded them. Humanity is now in the stage of the ripples, but the tide is flowing, and all men are being irresistibly forced from their petty vibrations with the little ripples to move with the larger and larger waves of human thought and sympathy now so rapidly forming on the ocean of life in response to the rising storm of human thought.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

One of the hardships of an editor's life is that an editor must have no opinions. Many and hard as the difficulties and puzzles are, this one, perhaps, is the most serious of all, because it is so hard to abstain from forming definite opinions and still more hard always to know an opinion from a prejudice or a mere fad.

"But if you have no opinions, I hear myself asked, what is it that guides your work?" Why,—a kind of an unspoken instinctive sense of the general drift of things. This is the nearest definition I can give, but devoutly hope that I have said enough to indicate what a potent enemy a well defined, well poised, self-respecting and consistant opinion would be to this vague, yet imperative sense.

Sometimes I get well written articles about things which have a vivid personal interest for me, articles, in fact, which command my immediate good opinion. Yet unquestionable as the merits of such articles are, there are cases when I resignedly pocket my opinion and refuse to print the article.

The fact is, that my sense of the general drift of things knows its own mind and is not to be argued with. And the one quality it positively and relentlessly demands from the articles for the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM is a certain quick touch of the fire of life, with which the author must be consumed, whilst writing, otherwise the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM will have none of him.

Needless to say an article answering the purpose in this respect, may be very deficient in many others: it may be poorly written, it may be suffering from lack of information, occasionally it may be slightly cranky, and often it may ruffle all the pet theories of the editor. Yet if the touch of the fire of life, a touch which cannot be described, but only felt, is present in the article—in it goes.

Good literary style, an ample supply of reliable information, and the sweet reasonableness of the author are very excellent things, and I do my best to secure them for the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM. Yet pleasing as they are, they are not absolutely necessary, and besides they can be had elsewhere. The one absolute condition of this magazine's acceptance is that the article should be so intense in its feeling, so disinterested in its purpose, so sincere and so im-

personal, as never to fail to speak to the souls of the readers in a direct and irresistible way.

It does not matter whether the soul of the reader is stirred into enthusiasm or ruffled into opposition. Be it but a short lived spark, the fire of life in the heart of the author succeeded in enkindling the heart of the reader. For the moment the barrier of separateness was broken, and that is all that was needed. The true purpose of all true literary communication was realized, the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM smiled approval, and my sense of the general drift of things was pacified.

For the real purpose of true literary art—of all art in fact—is just this lifting of the chains of our limitations: the establishing of good understanding between men, otherwise hide bound by the conditions of their lives, the gradual realization of the fact that your pain is my pain, that your interest is my interest, inseparable as we are in the bonds of the commonness of our humanity. And this commonness of our humanity can not be realized, it can not even be dimly perceived without the spark of the fire of life going from one heart into another.

This will explain to all sincere people why the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM publishes the article, which follows, and to which I gave the title of "From a Lonely Comrade," for want of a better.

Of course, it is not justifiable to talk as it does about "our standard Theosophical Society literature," for the Theosophical Society has no literature, unless it is in the sense of the ownership of books, Theosophical literature exclusively and logically belonging to the Theosophical *Movement*, not to the Theosophical *Society*. Of course, the author has no grounds whatever to talk about the prevalence of religious intolerance in our ranks. Never for one day of my life have I given up my devoted allegiance to the Christian church, in which I was brought up, an allegiance which only grows more reasoned and stable with years, yet though no "petted member of any branch," I am the generally accepted editor of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM and likely to continue so, for my sins. And so the "sting," which my Lonely Comrade is inclined to find so "terrible," would be terrible indeed, if it was true, but then it is not. Of course, I could justly put forward, that, though not

"brotherly," it is distinctly "motherly" to maintain a struggle against one's lower nature.

Flaws are not difficult to find in the passionate, therefore not controlled appeal of the Lonely Comrade. But I have no desire to do so. The Lonely Comrade knows just as well as I that "Theosophists truly are the happiest of all people," *if* they are Theosophists. Moreover, the second part of the appeal most adequately and triumphantly disproves most of the accusations made in the first part, with so much pain and bitterness.

Need I remind my public, that besides "Light on the Path," the "Bhagavadgita," etc., we also have the "Song of Life," which not even the sombrest of pessimists could accuse of being sad.

Flaws are easy to find in the letter under discussion. But so they are in every letter, article or book under the sun. But what is not as commonly found, what most literary productions lack altogether, faultless as they may be under every other aspect,—is a quality of entire sincerity, of passionate devotion and sensitive solicitude, which have the right to command our attention and with which the appeal of our Lonely Comrade is permeated.

No doubt whatever, that for these eager eyes, at least, for this burning heart, the countenance of modern Theosophy is "a beloved face" indeed.

And this is my reason for not only printing the appeal in question, but also three different comments on it, independently written by people, who have nothing in common but the very real attention they give to Theosophy.

My purpose is the hope, that every reader will be enkindled into wanting to see into the heart of the matter, and by his sincerity helping our common work.

FROM A LONELY COMRADE.

As one looks sometimes with alien eyes upon a beloved face, not to detect flaws in an ideal, but to get fresh impressions concerning it, so a devoted Theosophist may put himself in the mental attitude of an unprejudiced observer, with a keen desire to find out why the Ancient Wisdom Religion is not welcomed by the world, as other systems of thought have been welcomed.

That the intellectual world does not give Theosophy its true place in modern thought, is a regretable fact. That the beautiful ethical teachings have not yet permeated the lives of the masses, is still more sad.

Yet Theosophy has had its martyrs. It has been derided, feared, attacked, slandered, almost exterminated; all that any religion requires to gain a large following, and wield a wide-spread influence.

If it is not recognised to-day as the greatest philosophy of life ever given to man, either it has been poorly presented, or else there is some inherent flaw in the sublime teachings apparent to outsiders, and unnoticed by Theosophists.

We may be able to get this impartial view, by taking the criticisms of acquaintances, and the tone of the press, and by re-reading our standard Theosophical Society literature with this object in mind. What were *our* first impressions of Theosophy—before we grew into appreciation of its grandeur of outline, its vast breadth and depth, its majestic heights—all its divinely beautiful teachings?

Did we not first hear that it was a weird wonder-mongering fad,—a craze from the Orient, to be avoided as a plague, or derided as superstitions of the darker ages of the childhood of humanity? Time has proved that it was not a mere fad. People do not live and die heroically for fads, nor do they lightly sacrifice friendships, social position, and church dignities for a craze. How much were our pioneer Theosophists responsible for this common criticism, and the contempt of scholars?

Perhaps sensational methods were necessary evils at first, but we have all regretted, (in private, anyhow), those quasi-oriental robes, those rather tawdry miracles, those startling effects, that

seemed to attract the type of minds that gloat over the astonishing, the mysterious, remote, select, antique, etc.

All these unfortunate aspects, are of course, flaws in the presentation, not in the philosophy. They are counter to the quiet, resistless spirit of the teachings—but alas—they were what the masses heard of Theosophy, during stormy years of press attacks, ridicule, and calumny. It has antagonized many fine natures whose cultured tastes seek simplicity, not bombast; proofs in daily, beautiful living, not endless noisy quarrellings; dignified logical argument, not assertion, (which never could be proved, because of some occult pledge of secrecy—or other!) the fruits of our glorious teachings in *us*, the disciples. Then no more need of stump lectures, cornet solos, crusades, or law-courts!

This flaw in the introduction of Theosophy need not concern us so much now. It is a matter of the gradual refinement of taste among the people. We can be grateful for all the teachings received through our lion-hearted pioneers, and afford to overlook poor taste, and mixed metaphors.

But what of the second flaw, most often criticised by outsiders? "You are the narrowest little sect, to be so bigoted, I ever heard of!" "The orthodox are broad and *tolerant* in comparison to your small society!"

Show these critics the back of this magazine, and they laugh. "Reverence for other people's forms of faith? Why, the only thing you all agree about, is that the churches are full of hypocrites, or ignorant fools! How very patronising for this tiny sect, to extend the hand of good fellowship to all churches and societies once a month, or at world's congresses, while your members are bitterly prejudiced against other religious ways of thinking, and your lecturers attack our most cherished ideals!"

There is a terrible sting in this. We have been chosen to teach brotherly love, toleration, reverence for other faiths, and all creeds. Yet earnest Theosophists, who happened to be Christians, are not exactly petted members of our branches! In fact, a Theosophist from some other society is about as obnoxious, as a Christian, or the member (in good standing) of any other denomination in Christendom. We still prefer a coffee-colored brother from one of India's innumerable sects—to a white neighbor across the street.

Such is human nature! We Theosophists are to prove that our teachings uplift the human, to a divine plane. There are ways of uplifting which do the work as thoroughly, and more lastingly, than kicks. For centuries, humanity has tried to improve itself by violent means, by attacks, rows, noise, fierce denunciations of evils. It is time that we "occultists" (isn't that a comical name?) learned the beauty of the still, small voice, the resistless power of peaceful and loving thought-vibrations. "More than this, cometh of evil!"

Poor taste is not a serious defect in our beloved Society, but the spirit of religious intolerance is an old foe in new disguise. But after all, these little human frailties, (while they may have retarded, and even injured, the cause for a time), cannot be considered as vital defects in our great movement. The one criticism of the teachers, which demands our thought, is one which is made by almost every one, who looks into Theosophy for the first time: "How sad it all is!—Renunciation, sacrifice—eternal struggle upward, awful loneliness!" Now here, perhaps, is the reason why so-called "new thought" sects innumerable are springing up everywhere, flourishing, and generally respected, while Theosophy, (the real source of their supplies), can barely maintain a quorum of followers. By a divinely appointed instinct for the true, man wants Happiness. Whether his lot here be sad, or pleasant, he hungers for good tidings of great joy for a future existence.

And it is true that an insistent, dominant note of sadness is heard not only in the writings of our martyr pioneers, but through the sublimest passages of our greatest books. Take *Light on the Path,*—or *The Voice of the Silence,* or that glorious bible, *The Bhagavad Gita!*

One can readily understand why the lives of our pioneers were sombre and stern and prone to the dark side of things, but a certain bias of mind towards asceticism, and profound sadness is noticeable among our most modern spirits. Birth on any plane is painful. The re-birth of Theosophical thought into the world called for heroic measures, and heroic assistance. There were endless upheavals, excitements, violent struggles and such outcries, that it was a wonder that the Divine Vibration could be heard at all. But after Earth's cataclysmic throes, the Garden of Eden. Those stormy times have passed away. It is time that our glorious teach-

ings produce a glorious race of peace-loving, well poised and royally minded men and women.

We become like what we think upon. Here is our picture: a nature half divine, half demoniac, perpetually fighting gigantic temptations, in a hideous setting of mediæval darkness and despair. A house divided against itself cannot stand. The man at war within, and fighting shadows without, is not a happy, sane, or well-poised character. Is it *brotherly* for one to maintain a struggle *against* his lower nature?

And is it likely that people will turn to him for help and council, if he is covered with gaping wounds,precious life blood, and desolation? The more we dwell on these mental pictures (images) of sorrows, sins, and suffering, the more we multiply their phantom shapes, and give them place and power to assail us. The present is full enough of mirages arisen from neglected and parched desert places in our natures. It does not exactly cheer and encourage a sensitive person to be continually reminded, not only of the burden of Karma inherited from parents, but a grievous spiritual heredity from his past criminal self! Those endless ages of sin coiled behind him, casting a dire black shadow upon his strange and lonely destiny! Beware the awful danger of starting too soon and rashly on the Path! Beware of madness most of the time, but start at once, or risk being swept into the vortex with hosts of idle souls, if we don't!

Quagmires beneath our feet: ghastly serpents lurk beneath every blossom—(excuse mixed metaphors which do not effect the truth of the picture!) ceaseless efforts onward against fearful odds. Seven incarnations of anxious, desperate struggles towards the Path! Tearing out of our human heart-strings, tearless and awful agony, distrusting of even our highest aspirations, lest, after untold ages, we forfeit the great prize, only to find that we have crowned ourselves masters of selfishness, and lost a sweet earth, for an empty heaven.

Certainly, pain and woe are dominant still, but we Theosophists have been taught their mayavic quality—their inherent nothingness. Then of all people we should be happiest. We may think of Theosophy as of the Divine Light—and of ourselves as light-bringers, bearers of good tidings of great joy! We know the limitless power

of thought on the causal plane. However dreary our external circumstances, we can adapt ourselves cheerfully to the working of the Good Law. We are neither chance-tossed accidents of life in a materialistic world, nor are we (what we long believed!) the cringing, terrified, worshippers of a God of wrath or arbitrary love. We know that we are the results of our past choice of thoughts, and the cause of our future destiny. Knowing this, what shall daunt us? It is true that the "Kingdom of heaven must be taken by violence." Once taken, (and it is a *mental* step, from seeming discord, to real happiness, which must be taken, even by violence to our lower senses), the kingdom is ours. We can well afford to ignore illusions of sin, and sorrow, knowing the place of peace within. The master Christ said of evil: "I never knew you!" He refused to give place in His consciousness to even its embodied form in the black magician before Him. We need give no more thought to these old devils of fear, desire, discord—they wither and blow away into nothingness, without our thought! Enough of shadow-fighting! No doubt a black magician is an awful spectacle, and a very tangible danger to his trembling disciples, or to weak souls on his low level of consciousness, but to us, not of his world, he is about as threatening as the mummy of a long-dead Pharaoh, and as powerful. The illusions of others do not harm us. Let the dead go bury their dead. We live in perfect safety just in the measure we realise our innate oneness with the One divine Life. We have put away childish terrors. The mindstuff is plastic. We will make no more mud-pies, scare each other with no more dreadful ghost-stories. Dwelling on such uplifting thoughts as the omnipresence of the Divine Life, where are the ghouls, the viscid swamps, the hideous dreams, the intolerable loneliness of our past spiritual experience? We have studied quite minutely the protozoa of the ocean of life. Cuttle fish have their place, but they will keep to it, if we keep to our's. We prefer to think more upon the great Elder Brothers of humanity, and of our own glorious destiny as chosen servants of the race. The more exultant our happiness, the better we serve.

Suppose we *have* "built for ourselves forms of phantasmal horror?" We can build better,—and we will. Who shall say when our moment of freedom is to come? It may be now—this moment!

Man is ruler of the story and stronger than old bonds of Karma. There is not a dead atom in all the universe, and in each, is the Divine Life! Our real being is in unimaginable bliss, with archangels eager to help us, an eternity for work and joy, a myriad brother-soul to share our divine prerogatives.

"Know ye not that ye are gods?"

AN OUTSIDER'S OPINION.

I am asked to express an opinion on the article entitled "From a Lonely Comrade." Not being a member of any Theosophical Society, having but recently become interested in Theosophy, and, moreover, having but a very vague idea of the causes that lead to the various differences of opinion, and the final separation of the parent society into the many branches that exist at present, I am unable to express any opinion on the past history of the Theosophical movement, and must limit myself to giving an idea of how, in my opinion, matters stand at present.

In regard to the miracles: were these so called rather tawdry miracles and sensational methods necessary evils? Doubtless they were, under the former dispensation, or we would not have had them. Surely they served to call people's attention to the new teaching, if nothing else. Personally I must confess to a secret longing, at times, for just a little "magic," of the "tea cup" and "astral bell" kind, but, after all, do the miracles, or the absence of them, affect the truths taught by Theosophy in the slightest degree?

Naturally there have been quarrels among Theosophists, as among every body of people gathered together for a particular purpose, since the world began. And mistakes have been made by people, who had the best possible intentions. To become a Theosophist is not to become infallible, and again, these quarrels and mistakes do not affect the truth or falseness of the teachings of Theosophy in the least. If some people have become antagonized, and have given up Theosophy for something else, is it not possible that they have quarrelled with the teacher instead of the teaching, and while apparently following one of the many lines of the "new thought," they in reality are following the old teaching under a new name?

And is the sadness the result of Theosophy? Is it not rather the natural condition of the people who are attracted by its teachings and one reason, at least, why they are attracted? Were not a man tired of material pleasures, wearied of the things of this world and feeling about for something better and more stable, there would be no attraction in Theosophy. Conditions are not readjusted in a day, and it is unreasonable to expect we can toss aside the things

of this world as one would an old garment. There is renunciation—yes. But there also is the desire to renounce, or why should we be willing, though be it only at times, to attempt renunciation?

And is the way so awfully lonely? On the contrary, it seems to me, that there are many people, who have not the faintest idea of what theosophy is, and yet are good Theosophists.

It seems to me, that the Lonely Comrade takes an unwarranted pessimistic view of the present condition of the movement. To one who has been through the campaign, it is always a depressing sight to see the army disbanded and the soldiers returning to their duties as citizens. And that seems to be the position of theosophy to-day. At first the work was done in a body, many hard knocks were given and received and there was the noise and confusion of battle; Theosophy once given out to the world, the work was done and the army of Theosophical workers disbanded to resume their various callings, still bearing in their hearts the teachings which they can no more forget than a conscript can forget his years of military training.

Theosophy is anything but almost exterminated. When we look about us and see the rapidly increasing "new thought" movements, among whose branches there is not one that did not teach some part of Theosophy or something derived from it, we cannot but realize that the work still is going on. Difficult as it is, in many cases, to identify their connection with what is so truly said to be "the real source of all their supplies," still they are the result of the work of Theosophy. And in the forsaking of dogma, the stirring of dry bones, the striving for spiritual things and the broadening of ideas, we see the results for which the early pioneers of Theosophy worked so hard and so bravely.

AN OLD WORKER'S COMMENT.

I have read the article of a Lonely Comrade with interest, so much does it contain of valuable contribution to questions of present-day moment in the Theosophical world, and so many points does it suggest which it is well worth while to consider. To one who has been a student of Theosophy for a long time, and who has moreover participated in the work of the Theosophical Society, many of the objections raised would appear to be easily disposed of by further information, and the clearer understanding such information of necessity would bring. It is of importance that this clearer understanding become more general if possible, and each opportunity that presents itself should be gladly welcomed. Particularly is this so when our own members are concerned; for Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, both, have shared the common lot, in suffering more from the half-knowledge and intense zeal of their adherents than from any other source whatsoever.

The first point I should like to advance therefore,—one of fundamental importance, and one which this article ignores,—is the essential difference between Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. This point is invariably overlooked by the general public, something in no wise to be wondered at since it is an error into which our own members continually fall. The Theosophical Society is merely a *Society*, "with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose." In the apt words of a fellow student, "the Theosophical Society has no doctrines, and is merely a place of inquiry,—an ante-room, where the news of the spiritual world are laid out on tables, for every one to take exactly what he pleases." This was the idea of the original founders; it has always been the idea of those in charge of the government and organization of the Society; and when anyone in a position of prominence or authority has held otherwise, a careful survey of our history will show their invariable removal, sooner or later. That Fellows of the Society have held, written, spoken and acted otherwise, does not in the least disprove this fact. On the contrary, it proves that the Theosophical Society has been true to its chief object, absolute tolerance, and has therefore tolerated its own worst enemies—none the less such in fact, because they believed themselves friends.

The Boston Proclamation, as it is called, contains the exact and literal exposition of the Society's attitude and intentions. (You will note that in it the distinction is made between, "students of Theosophy," and "members of Theosophical Societies.") That individual members do not carry this out either in thought or practise is no fair argument. Broad as our Society is, we must expect to have both the tolerant and the intolerant in our ranks, with a probable preponderance of the latter, since human nature is much given to this error. Bigoted students of Theosophy are just as bigoted as bigoted Christians or bigoted Buddhists. Bigotry is bigotry, no matter what cloak we may try to hide it under. Truly, a bigoted F. T. S. must find himself in an extraordinary position, if he ever stops to analyse it, and realizes what a contradiction he is: there are many such, nevertheless. As for a bigoted Theosophist! well, such simply cannot be: in the mere fact of his bigotry, he would cease instantly to be a Theosophist, no matter how much of the philosophy he had studied, how many lectures he had given, nor how many societies he belonged to or supported.

What a Theosophist really is has been already defined by high authority, and in terms which should make the vainest man hesitate long ere he honour himself with the title. I have worked with students of Theosophy and members of the Theosophical Society for years. All the same I can count on the fingers of one hand all the "Theosophists" it has ever been my privilege to know, and some I have known best were not F. T. S. at all.

So much for the Society. Theosophy on the other hand is a distinct body of philosophy, with distinct theories, explanations of life, etc. It is an elaborate, systematic, and most ancient scheme of thought, claiming the attention and the belief of many, and inviting the investigation of all. Quite true is it that many members of the Theosophical Society are students of this philosophy, a fewer number believers in it, but the Society, for all that, must not be held responsible therefor. In certain parts of the world, the majority of Theosophical Society members are Buddhists. So much so, and to such an extent is this known, that members of the Society have been accused of being Buddhists. I have several times had this happen to me, and have been asked, in all good faith, if I were not a Buddhist because I was an F. T. S! The term "Theosphical,"

we must not forget, has a general as well as a special meaning. Its general significance is well known to all scholars, and makes its use eminently fitting as the title of a Society such as ours. The special meaning has become prominent in recent years, as identified with the writings of Mme. Blavatsky.

One or two further comments and I have finished. The article of a Lonely Comrade starts by inquiring "why the Ancient Wisdom Religion is not welcomed by the world as other systems of thought have been welcomed." Surely that is strange! What great religion ever emerged from its initial period of obscurity and ridicule in less than thirty years? Are we seeking the cheap notoriety and immediate benefit of the short-lived systems, which spring up in a night, become a fad, and disappear utterly from view after a few short years? Like the seed falling upon stony ground "where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched: and because they had no root they withered away." We are sowing, not for time, but for Eternity: we are labouring not for the present generation, but for those to come: our harvest day is still a long time off.

Then we are reproached with sadness! Now for this reproach I can find no reason whatsoever. It would almost seem as if sadness had been confused with *seriousness*. Serious we certainly are, as those who concern themselves with Life and Death and the Beyond, must ever be: but sad!—Only a materialist could find us so. To him all religion, all spiritual thought and speculation, must be sad,—reminding him forever that those things to which his life and heart are wedded, are in their essence ephemeral and transitory, soon to be engulfed in oblivion, he with them. If some of our "martyr pioneers" have been sad, we need not blame them, since they were human after all: still less the philosophy, for which they spent their lives. Without the strength and the courage their faith gave them, they would never have accomplished what they did: and it was where *they* failed, not where the philosophy failed, that the sadness entered in. Immortal life and immortal hope are the keynotes of Theosophy: eternal progress and eternal joy our most clearly defined facts. When our books address the sensualist, or the man of the world, they depict this path of endeavour as one

of woe,—for woe indeed it would mean to him until his higher nature woke to life. And they do this, not to entice him to this path, as the article implies, but to warn him from it, bidding him wait until the eternal progress of the ages will have brought him to another desire and another sense of life. It may appear a hard saying, but all this woe and agony belong to the veriest tyro,—to him who has not yet taken the first step. We are bidden to "grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air,"—not by a painful process of uprooting. This agony is "a phantasmal outer form of horror" which we have built up for ourselves: the reality is "faith, hope, and love," the "song of life." "Life itself has speech, and is never silent. And its utterance is not *as you that are deaf* may suppose, a cry: it is a song."

Only that which is ephemeral is ever sad. All brief-lived things bear on them this sure sign of overshadowing nothingness. We may take comfort for our sorrows in this thought; and Theosophy is misunderstood if construed to teach that pain is anything but an illusion,—the shadow of the reality, which is joy.

One sentence in this article stands out for me in words of fire: "Yet earnest Theosophists who happened to be Christians, are not exactly petted members of our branches!" Can this anywhere or at any time, be, or have been, an actual fact! If there were any branch of the Theosophical Society of which I knew this to be so, I would never rest satisfied until I had succeeded in having its charter rescinded, and its individual members remonstrated with in the plainest and most uncompromising terms. Fortunately I am acquainted with none such nor ever have been since my early days: bigoted individuals I have found in plenty, but branches in which intolerance ran such riot, it has never been my tragic fate to know.

In conclusion it might be wise to state, that the article of a Lonely Comrade contains just criticism of some people's ideas, but could never be fairly considered a criticism either of Theosophy or the Theosophical Society.

CAVÉ.

Twenty-ninth March, 1903.

PATIENT PERSON'S IDEA.

I have read the complaint of our Lonely Comrade, and find in it much that is suggestive. However, I shall confine myself to one point, and that a very important one: the association of sadness and sorrow with spiritual life. This association, if it is to be found in any marked degree in the books of modern Theosophists, does not by any means begin there. It is as old almost as the history of religion. Let us trace a few mile-stones on the path of man's religious psychology.

In the ancient religion of Egypt, or, to speak more accurately, in one of the many forms of faith and teaching belonging to old Egypt, we have the tragical story of the persecution and death of Osiris, and the scattering of his limbs along the shores of the sea. The story is full of pathos and tragedy, and the atmosphere which surrounds it is full of gloom.

We find fewer of these shadows in the old faith of China; indeed there is a certain sunny calm in the oldest forms of Chinese religion, the like of which it is difficult to find elsewhere. But when we come to Babylonia, we again find the dominant note of tragedy and gloom and when we pass to the younger members of the same stock, the Hebrews, we are in the very midst of religious tragedy. The Old Testament is a record of woes, and the central figure of the New is the Man of Sorrows.

In the oldest of the deeper manifestations of religion in India, the Upanishads, we have once more the sunshine of the golden age; but in all the later manifestations of Indian wisdom, there is the note of renunciation and sadness. The lamentations of Prince Siddhartha over all human life, as doomed to decay, were recently given in these pages; and the other great sage of more modern times, Shankara Acharya, has pages of exactly the same import, full of words of renunciation.

Therefore the history of religion has always been tinged with sadness; not merely in our day, or by some of the writers we may have known personally, but in all lands, and through all times. So far our facts. Let us come now to the explanation of the facts.

Why is religion, or the teaching of the great awakening, the new birth, so universally associated with sadness? What is the hidden link between religion and sorrow? Why is the Man of

Sorrows so universally accepted as the symbol of the new life, in the thought, the art, the devotionalism of twenty centuries?

To find the deep and underlying reason, we shall have to consider what the new birth, the great awakening is; and this is a very large question, in reality being the determination of what religion and wisdom and philosophy are, and why they should be followed.

To put it in one way, the great awakening is the change from individual to universal consciousness; from the self-centered individuality, to something wider, including new elements, and therefor breaking down old barriers and limitations. We come to the full growth of the individuality, the conscious personal self, in this way: Life takes as its basis the consciousness of the animal, with its range of sensations, its great dominating instincts of self-defence and race-continuity. Then the psychic life is added to this, the purpose being to change the conscious animal to a self-conscious man. This is done by focussing and condensing the animal consciousness, and transferring it to the psychic world,—in which we all habitually live and move and have our being, merely wearing the animal consciousness as an outer veil.

By focussing and condensing the animal instinct of self-defence, it is permuted to the passion of egotism or ambition, in virtue of which every man or woman has the innate desire to excel or outstrip or overreach, or outdo, or in some way get the better of, every other man or woman in general, or to get the better of some particular man or woman, in some definite undertaking or purpose. We have all this tendency, and we can feel its influence at any moment, in the instinctive habit of the mind to consider ourselves cleverer or better or at any rate more important, more in the center of things, than any other person; with a latent inclination to sacrifice another to our interest rather than sacrificing ourselves to the interest of another. It will be an instructive exercise for anyone to watch this instinctive motion of the mind in its many expressions, with its single essential characteristic, the desire to put ourselves ahead of the other person, to advance our interest, or, much more profoundly, our idea of ourselves, above our idea of the other person.

Besides the instinct of self-defence, the animal has the instinct of individual continuity and race continuity, each moved or guided

by sensation; in the one case the sense of hunger and taste, and in the other the sense of sex. When these are focussed and condensed in the personality, they are transmuted into the desire of sensation, which is present all the time, unceasingly, in complete contrast to the alternate waking and sleeping of the sensations of the animal.

We have thus two things brought to a head in the personality a centralised consciousness, the abuse of which is egotism or ambition and a perpetual sense of sensation, the abuse of which is sensuality. The purpose evidently is, to make a certain approach to divine consciousness, which is clear and vivid, and which is also perpetual. The personal consciousness has, therefore, the qualities of both animal and divine; it gives to the consciousness of the animal that quality of self-knowledge, which belongs to the gods; it gives to the sensational consciousness of the animal that perpetual duration which is of the eternities.

For the animal, there are the two states: waking and sleeping, both for the entire group of bodily powers, and for each sensation. Thus the sense of sex sleeps for months in the animal.

When we have the perpetual consciousness of personal man, this alternation of waking and sleeping is, of course, shut out by the very conditions of that consciousness; it cannot be at once continuous and not continuous. Therefore, as the continuance of one quality of sensation means a deadening and dullness, resulting in a loss of sensation, the only way to secure perpetual feeling is by alternating the quality of feeling; in other words, by splitting sensation into two groups, with the pleasant on the one side and the painful on the other, and by alternating these two, replacing pleasure by pain, and so on. It is evident that, since the one aim of the personal life, is, to get perpetual feeling or emotion, pain is as much its necessary food as pleasure. A stick must have two ends. Sorrow is the bread of life of the emotional nature, because, without alternating sorrow, pleasure would become meaningless and inert. Therefore there are as many tragedies among the world's dramas as there are comedies; and our natures, even unconsciously, always tend to recognize the superiority of the tragedy, the tragical motive, the gloomy plot, as having more dignity, more relation to our human life.

This pedigree of emotion is only a brief suggestion for a

great theme; but this much becomes clear: that the so-called tragic emotions are keener and more strongly felt than the so-called pleasures and we are therefore led to think that, when the great epoch of emotional life is about coming to an end, and getting ready to give place to something else, we shall have an accumulation, a culmination of tragical emotion, the last and finest manifestation of psychic life, when psychic life is about to make way for a life not psychical.

The two things which will be eliminated, are the dependence on sensation for a sense of being alive; and the dependence on egotism, or the feeling of one's own all-importance, for the sense of being real. And we may say here, that, in the getting rid of these two things, there are fine opportunities for emotion, and therefore for the greatest of all the emotions, the emotion of sorrow. These two things, the dependence on sensation, and the dependence on self-importance, are to be put away, and he will indeed be a man of sweet and singularly balanced character, who can do the great work with an unbroken smile.

Thus the outgrowing of the psychical is of necessity subject to sorrow, since sorrow is the quintescence and fine flower of the psychical. What is to take the place of these things, is part of a larger theme.

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